

2026-27 NSW Budget Submission

*Seizing a unique opportunity to improve responses to men
using domestic and family violence*



Acknowledgement 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.

About No to Violence

No to Violence is growing the movement to end men's use of domestic and family violence. For over 30 years, we have been working directly with men who use domestic and family violence to support them to change.

Our expertise in their beliefs, attitudes, behaviour and choices has enabled us to develop standards, programs and training, lead policy development, and fulfil our role as the largest peak body in Australia for organisations and individuals working with men to end domestic and family violence.

As a feminist organisation, the safety of women and children is at the centre of everything we do. It is by ending men's violence that families can have happier, safer and more dignified and fulfilled lives.

Our members come from a diverse range of professional and community backgrounds and work in a number of settings including the community sector, government and private practice.

Contact

No to Violence Policy and Research

- ntv.org.au
- policyandresearch@ntv.org.au

Men's Referral Service

- 1300 766 491

Contents

Recommendations	5
Executive Summary	6
Provide \$224 million over four years for initial implementation of the NSW Strategy to respond to the use of Domestic and Family Violence.....	8
Objective 1: Increase the knowledge and ability of services, systems and communities to identify and safely respond to men using DFV	9
1.1: Build capability across the broader responses system – including government agencies and allied services – to identify, engage and refer men using DFV	9
1.2: Expand early intervention initiatives with young men and boys, and male-dominated industries	10
1.3: Invest in building the capability of family, friends, communities and workplaces to intervene.....	10
Objective 2: Enhance the integration and proactivity of responses so that men using DFV are referred to interventions to enable them to stop using violence	11
2.1: Expand intervention pathways for men using DFV at the start of the legal process	12
2.2: Strengthen Safety Action Meetings’ focus on men using DFV	12
2.3: Fund DFV service providers to collaborate	12
Objective 3: Develop an integrated suite of interventions that effectively enables men using DFV to take responsibility and stop using violence	13
3.1: Fund MBCPs to deliver to best practice standards.....	14
3.2: Expand MBCPs to meet need	15
3.3: Fund an integrated suite of interventions for men using DFV	17
3.4: Ensure scaling up of men’s DFV interventions are integrated as part of multi-layered, community-led approaches to prevent and respond to DFV	19
Objective 4: Build a workforce and evidence base that supports expanded responses to men using DFV	19
4.1: Invest in developing a strong, specialised and sustainable workforce	19
4.2: Invest in practice-based research to improve the evidence base	20
Fund a peak body to strengthen the evidence base and policy and practice responses to end men’s use of DFV.....	21

Establish a DFV reform implementation body responsible for coordinating the sector and how the NSW Government and its agencies deliver DFV reforms.... 22

Commit at least a further \$7.5 million to implement the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Workforce Development Strategy 22

Commit at least a further \$8 million to implement the NSW Aboriginal Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Plan 23

Commit a further \$11.4 million to implement the Common Approach to Risk Assessment and Safety..... 23

Commit a further \$50 million to implement the NSW Strategy for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence 24

Recommendations

1. Provide \$224 million over four years for initial implementation of the NSW Strategy to respond to the use of Domestic and Family Violence.
2. Fund a peak body to strengthen the evidence base and policy and practice responses to end men's use of family violence.
3. Establish a DFV reform implementation body responsible for coordinating the sector and how the NSW Government and its agencies deliver DFV reforms.
4. Commit at least a further \$7.5 million to implement the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Workforce Development Strategy.
5. Commit at least a further \$8 million to implement the NSW Aboriginal Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Plan.
6. Commit a further \$11.4 million to implement the Common Approach to Risk Assessment and Safety.
7. Commit a further \$50 million to implement the NSW Strategy for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence.

Executive Summary

Despite increased attention of the need to work with men and boys to stop domestic and family violence (DFV), funding to prevent and respond to DFV remains grossly inadequate compared to the scale and complexity of the problem. Only a small proportion of men using DFV are formally identified. Meanwhile, many men using DFV who aren't formally identified are known or suspected by family, friends, colleagues and service practitioners but aren't responded to because of fear or a lack of knowledge, skills or tools to safely engage. Those men using DFV who are formally identified too often fall through gaps because of a lack of coordinated, proactive engagement and referral processes. With funding for men's family violence interventions extremely limited, only a small number of identified men using DFV are able to attend programs.

Although approximately 103,650 NSW women experience intimate partner violence each year and NSW Police attend more than 180,000 DFV incidents each year, most men using DFV are not formally identified.^{1 2} We estimate at least 1,056,000 men in NSW have used intimate partner violence in their lifetime.³ Of the men using DFV who are formally identified, 34,000 men receive a court-ordered Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) each year.⁴ However, ADVOs are preliminary interventions that do not meaningfully facilitate behaviour change in many users of violence. The vast majority of men who receive an ADVO are left floating without any additional intervention until they breach their order. Eventually 22.6% of men with ADVOs breach their orders – over 16,000 men in the last year alone.⁵ Despite the scale of this problem, there are only 900 funded men's behaviour change program (MBCP) places each year, meaning only roughly 3% of men with ADVOs receive a specialist DFV intervention. The forthcoming *NSW Strategy to respond to the use of DFV* is a unique opportunity to change this story. To do this requires a **\$224 million investment to implement the *NSW Strategy to respond to the use of DFV*** to broaden and strengthen responses to men using DFV, which will:

- Increase the knowledge and ability of services, systems and communities to identify and safely respond to men using DFV.
- Enhance the integration and proactivity of responses so that men using DFV are referred to interventions to enable them to stop using violence.
- Develop an integrated suite of interventions that effectively enable men using DFV to take responsibility and stop using violence.
- Build a workforce and evidence base that supports expanded responses to men using DFV.

To enable this transformational reform, we recommend building the evidence base for intervening earlier and more effectively with men using DFV, centring this knowledge in policy and practice development, and expanding sector development support to build the capacity of services working to

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023). Personal Safety Survey. [PSS State and territory prevalence and time series \(Tables 9 to 14\)](#).

² Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023). [Partner violence](#).

³ Calculated using the [Ten to Men study finding that 35% of Australian men aged 18-65 have used intimate partner violence in their lifetime](#). With [3,017,416 men aged 20+ in NSW](#), there are approximately 1,056,095 men in NSW aged 20+ who have used IPV in their lifetime

⁴ Data sourced from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, reference AVO-2025Q2.

⁵ Data sourced from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, reference AVO-2025Q2.

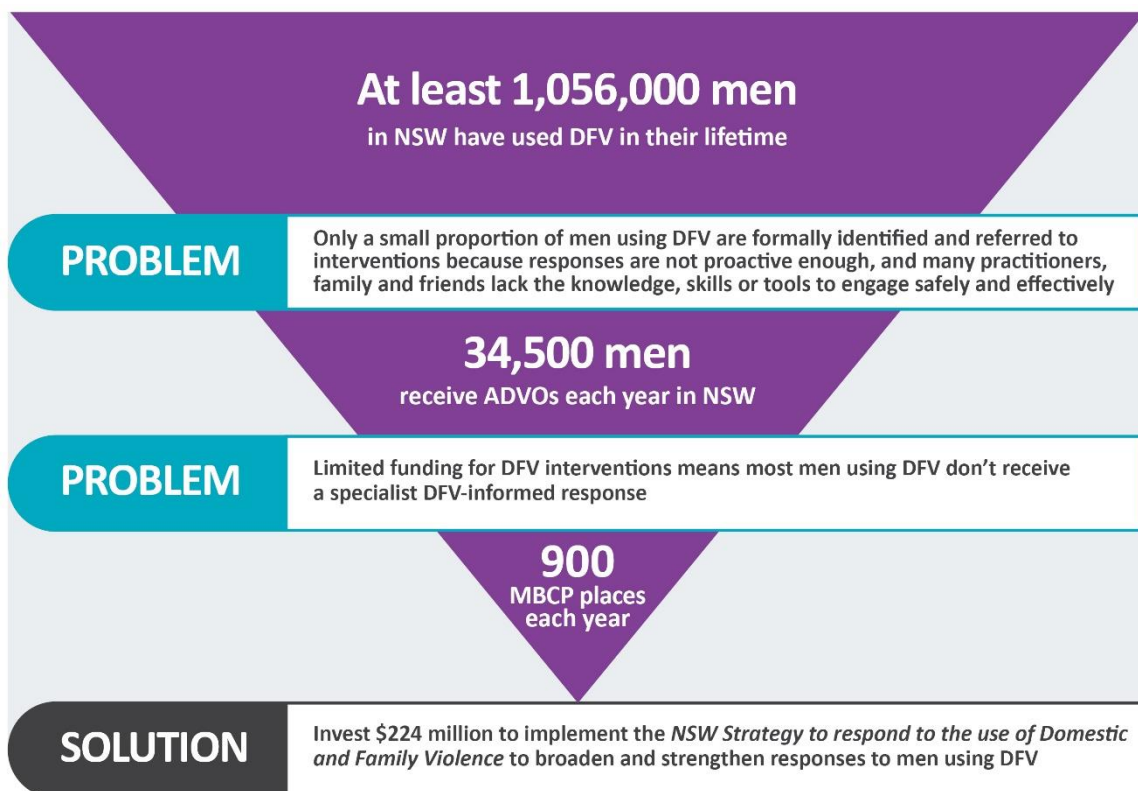
stop men using DFV. This can be enabled by **funding No to Violence as the NSW peak body for services working with men using DFV.**

This submission also recommends investment in a suite of sector reforms to build a **strong and specialised workforce**, develop **Aboriginal-led and self-determined responses to DFV**, implement the **Common Approach to Risk Assessment and Safety (CARAS)**, and **advance primary prevention initiatives**. To optimise implementation effectiveness and accountability of Government for delivery of these reforms, we recommend **establishing a DFV reform implementation body**.

The investment and reforms outlined in this submission are required to enable earlier engagement of men using DFV and shift away from an over-reliance on late-stage criminal and civil justice responses that reinforce crisis responses to DFV. While men’s behaviour change programs (MBCPs) currently receive only \$12.7 million per year in NSW, the NSW Government spends approximately 40 times as much to keep men using DFV locked in prison at a cost of \$517 million annually⁶, in addition to hundreds of millions on policing, judicial proceedings, legal services, correctional facilities, and child protection responses to DFV. Until funding is re-directed to enable earlier engagement of men using violence through DFV-informed, evidence-based interventions, violence will escalate, and the safety and wellbeing of women and children will remain at risk.

This submission is informed by consultations with No to Violence’s NSW members and the NSW Men’s Behaviour Change Network (MBCN). It also includes findings from recent surveys of our NSW members and the MBCN, which captured insights on providers’ experiences and funding priorities.

The inverted pyramid of missed opportunities



⁶ With roughly [3,242 men in NSW prisons for DFV-related offences](#) in September 2025, and it [costing more than \\$437 per day to keep a person in prison](#), the NSW Government is spending approximately \$517 million per year to keep men using DFV locked up.

Provide \$224 million over four years for initial implementation of the NSW Strategy to respond to the use of Domestic and Family Violence

The forthcoming *NSW Strategy to respond to the use of DFV* is a unique opportunity to end violence at its source by scaling up and strengthening responses to men using DFV. After decades in which specialist DFV responses to men using DFV have largely been a funding afterthought, the NSW Government now has a framework to deliver the transformational change required to build an integrated response system that stops men using violence and keeps victim-survivors safe.

Although approximately 103,650 NSW women experience intimate partner violence each year and police attend more than 180,000 DFV incidents, most users of violence are not formally identified or meaningfully responded to.^{7,8} We estimate at least 1,056,000 men in NSW have used intimate partner violence in their lifetime.⁹ Expanding this alarming figure to men who have used DFV more broadly than in intimate partner relationships – including violence against children and other family members – there is likely well over 1 million men in NSW who have used DFV. 34,000 men receive a warning in the form of a court-ordered Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) each year^{10,11}. Those who are informally identified also often don't receive meaningful responses to change their behaviour because of social and systemic barriers which prevent them from being held accountable and limit help seeking. Eventually 22.6% of men with ADVOs breach¹² Despite the scale of this problem, there are only 900 funded men's behaviour change program (MBCP) places each year, meaning only roughly 3% of men with ADVOs receive a specialist DFV intervention.

The *NSW Strategy to respond to the use of DFV* provides a roadmap to change this story and achieve the following objectives:

- Objective 1: Increase the knowledge and ability of services, systems and communities to identify and safely respond to men using DFV.
- Objective 2: Enhance the integration and proactivity of responses so that men using DFV are referred to interventions to enable them to stop using violence.

⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023). [Personal Safety Survey. PSS State and territory prevalence and time series \(Tables 9 to 14\)](#).

⁸ Law Enforcement Conduct Commission. (2023). [Review of NSW Police Force responses to domestic and family violence incidents](#).

⁹ Calculated using the [Ten to Men study finding that 35% of Australian men aged 18-65 have used intimate partner violence in their lifetime](#). With [3,017,416 men aged 20+ in NSW](#), there are approximately 1,056,095 men in NSW aged 20+ who have used IPV in their lifetime

¹⁰ Data sourced from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, reference AVO-2025Q2.

¹¹ While men using DFV are formally identified through other processes, included reports to specialist DFV services and DFV offences recorded by police, the overwhelming majority of these men have already received ADVOs.

¹² Data sourced from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, reference AVO-2025Q2.

- Objective 3: Develop an integrated suite of interventions that effectively enable men using DFV to take responsibility and stop using violence.
- Objective 4: Build a workforce and evidence base that supports expanded responses to men using DFV.

Below we outline recommendations to achieve these objectives, which crucially depend on sustained investment to implement the strategy.

Objective 1: Increase the knowledge and ability of services, systems and communities to identify and safely respond to men using DFV

As highlighted above, only a small proportion of men using DFV are formally identified. Meanwhile, social and systemic barriers to help seeking – such as unsafe government services that cause further harm to victims and people who report violence – mean that men using DFV who are informally identified also often don't receive meaningful responses to change their behaviour. As a result, there are significant missed opportunities for intervention. Because 68-79% of women who experience violence by a partner never report to police¹³, it is critical to build the capability to formally identify men using DFV through government agencies and allied services, and support responses to informal identification.

The failure to identify the majority of men using DFV means opportunities are consistently missed to intervene and prevent further perpetration. Every missed opportunity for intervention further jeopardises the safety and dignity of victim-survivors, sending a dangerous message to men using DFV that they are free to continue doing so. Urgent action is required to increase the proportion of men using DFV who are identified.

1.1: Build capability across the broader responses system – including government agencies and allied services – to identify, engage and refer men using DFV

Many men using DFV who are not formally identified are engaged with the broader response system, which includes police, courts, child protection, corrections, and universal and allied services, like education, disability, housing, migration and healthcare. While these men's use of DFV may be suspected or known, it is too often not responded to effectively because many frontline responders across the broader system lack the knowledge, skills or tools to identify and engage men using violence. Additionally, frontline practitioners may hesitate to formally identify men using DFV due to fears of potential repercussions, stemming from inadequate systemic protections for those who report. Education should focus on building understanding of the patterns and dynamics of DFV perpetration, safe engagement strategies, and knowledge of and ability to use referral pathways.

¹³ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023). [Partner violence](#).

“Primary health, mental health, AOD, and housing services are often in contact with people using violence before police or courts are. Staff in these services could be better trained to identify indicators of family violence perpetration and make warm referrals.” – North East Men’s Behaviour Change

1.2: Expand early intervention initiatives with young men and boys, and male-dominated industries

By intervening earlier with young men and boys at risk of using, or beginning to use, violence, NSW can prevent harm to women and children while also reducing the strain on the services and systems that respond to DFV. Frontline service providers emphasise that effective early intervention with young men and boys should be multifaceted, including providing tools to parents, teachers and other influential role models such as sport coaches to act as role models. In addition to these early intervention initiatives, tailored interventions for young men and boys are required, outlined in Recommendation 3.3.

“We would like to be able to get into schools and have a multi-pronged approach. So not only just working with young people but going in and having an approach where we can work with young people and teachers who have been raised in the same patriarchy that we've been raised in and also parents. So, a 3-pronged approach all at the same time.” – Relationships Australia Canberra & Regions

Targeted early intervention should also be pursued in male-dominated industries, like construction and mining, to reach large numbers of men and leverage workplace influence. These interventions could include safe and respectful workplace training, bystander intervention training, and information for disclosing and seeking help.

1.3: Invest in building the capability of family, friends, communities and workplaces to intervene

More DFV is reported to family and friends than to any part of the formal response system.¹⁴ However, a lack of attention on the vital role families, friends, communities and workplaces play means many people don't have the knowledge or resources to identify, assess and respond to men using DFV. The capability of these informal networks can be activated by investing in communication and social mobilisation campaigns, partnerships between DFV services and local networks such as sports clubs and community groups, and training programs to promote respectful relationships, identify signs of DFV perpetration and respond safely.

¹⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2024). [How do people respond to FDSV](#).

Objective 2: Enhance the integration and proactivity of responses so that men using DFV are referred to interventions to enable them to stop using violence

Many men using DFV who are identified fall through gaps because of a lack of coordinated, proactive engagement and referral processes. Typically, the primary response consists of a court issuing an ADVO outlining prohibited behaviours. While ADVOs play an important role in holding men using DFV accountable and may be an effective tool to disrupt the behaviour of some, in isolation they are not a sufficient mechanism to change the behaviour of many users of violence.

Ultimately, many men with ADVOs are left out of sight without any check on them other than an occasional ADVO compliance check, until they breach their conditions – by which point significant harm has occurred to victim-survivors. As highlighted earlier, this approach does not address the underlying drivers of DFV, and many men breach their ADVOs. The true extent of breaches is likely significantly higher, given documented failures by NSW Police to investigate breaches and consistent reports from victim-survivors that reported breaches are not taken seriously or actively minimised.^{15 16}

“The first intervention they get is an ADVO and they get this bit of paper that says you've been bad, don't be bad. And then nothing happens to them again until they breach that. And then the justice system comes in. The system needs to be much more responsive because the men that come through our services in their offending period will offend against three different women. So, by the time we've removed the first family to safety, we're two families behind.” – Claude Robinson, Manager, Rainbow Lodge

Meanwhile, the service system's approach to working with men using DFV is fragmented, with a lack of consistent focus across systems and services enabling men to slip through gaps and avoid accountability. Men using DFV who are formally identified are not tracked effectively across different systems, which hinders the capacity of service providers to deliver coordinated and informed responses due to incomplete information to assess and manage risk. Without concerted efforts to strengthen collaborative information sharing and proactive engagement of men using DFV across the broader response system, opportunities to intervene effectively and keep men in sight will remain limited, thereby continuing to place victim-survivors at significant risk.

¹⁵ Review of NSW Police Force responses to domestic and family violence incidents. [Law Enforcement Conduct Commission](#).

¹⁶ Women's Legal Service NSW. [Response to Review of Police-issued ADVO](#).

2.1: Expand intervention pathways for men using DFV at the start of the legal process

The current over-reliance on ADVOs too often means at the crucial early stages following formal identification, men using DFV are not offered services that enable them to take accountability for their actions and change their behaviour. As outlined above, this lack of meaningful intervention means not enough is done to stop the cycle of violence. While some service providers take initiative to build relationships and referral pathways with local courts, this work is unfunded and sporadic across the state.

Directing men using violence to get support when they first come to attention of the justice system presents a valuable opportunity to engage users of violence to build their understanding of the impacts of their behaviour, encourage reflection on the relationships they wish to have, and identify the changes necessary to achieve them. These referrals could include to the Men's Referral Service and local service providers to begin conversations about their use of violence and pathways to change. When facilitated by practitioners with specialist DFV expertise, these responses can help prevent escalation of violence while ensuring victim-survivor safety is prioritised.

Importantly, this intervention pathway approach is not intended to replace MBCPs or other comprehensive interventions. Rather, it serves as an additional, complementary response that can enhance engagement at the outset of the legal process. This early service contact can also support increased referrals for co-occurring issues such as alcohol and other drug use, mental health concerns, and housing – factors that, if not addressed, can limit a person's capacity to meaningfully participate in behaviour change.

"We need to engage men at the start of the legal process, instead of just giving them an ADVO" – Claude Robinson, Manager, Rainbow Lodge

2.2: Strengthen Safety Action Meetings' focus on men using DFV

Safety Action Meetings (SAMs) play a vital role in coordinating responses to support victim-survivor safety but do not focus on how to change the behaviour of the user of violence. Services for men using DFV are often not invited to attend SAMs and discussions about responding to men using DFV in SAMs are usually exclusively limited to justice responses. This imbalance reflects the broader response system's burdening of victim-survivors and failure to place onus on the behaviour of men using DFV. By increasing the focus on men using DFV in SAMs, there is opportunity to utilise the collective service knowledge and case information to drive more coordinated and effective responses to men using DFV.

2.3: Fund DFV service providers to collaborate

Service providers possess a unique understanding of their communities and the contexts they live in. Subsequently, they are well placed to determine the most appropriate and effective responses to DFV.

To realise this requires cross-sector, multi-agency collaboration. Better supporting DFV service providers to collaborate will:

- Enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of referral pathways.
- Enable services to leverage local knowledge and expertise for improved outcomes.
- Help identify and respond to local workforce gaps.
- Build organisational and sector capacity through collaboration such as exchanging practice experiences, sharing learning, identifying training needs and strengthening support networks.

Unfortunately, service providers often have limited capacity for structured, strategic collaboration with each other due to limited funding capacities and immediate service delivery demands. While the Local Domestic and Family Violence Committee Grants program has been a positive initiative, it has focused on raising community awareness about DFV rather than fostering collaboration between service providers. In addition to resourcing service providers so they can collaborate, investment is needed to resource coordination roles to bring people together.

Objective 3: Develop an integrated suite of interventions that effectively enables men using DFV to take responsibility and stop using violence

Currently, a very small proportion of men using DFV participate in DFV-informed, evidence-based interventions. This tiny availability of specialist DFV interventions is concerning, because beyond these, the system is relying on punitive justice responses for which there is a lack of evidence are an effective way to change behaviour in the long term.¹⁷ The scale of perpetration and inequitable impact of criminalisation on marginalised communities, including high rates of misidentification of marginalised people as the predominant aggressor, underscore that we can't police our way out of DFV. Significant investment is required to expand the scale and diversity of DFV interventions.

"If we don't work and heal the men who use violence and control in the family, we will never solve this issue. We cannot criminalise and imprison our way out of it." – Claude Robinson, Manager, Rainbow Lodge

There is also a lack of diversity of interventions available for men who use DFV. Although creative and tailored adaptations of MBCPs have been developed for cohorts including culturally and racially marginalised men, men with cognitive impairment, LGBTIQ+ people, and Aboriginal communities, funding for these programs is limited and often short-term. With funding for the MBCP Development Grants, which have supported some of these adaptations, set to lapse in June 2026 and no indication

¹⁷ Travenza and Poynton. (2016). [Does a prison sentence affect future domestic violence reoffending?](#).

the level of funding for the recommissioning of MBCPs will be expanded to ensure these programs can continue, this innovation is at risk of being hindered by a lack of sustainable funding.

In addition to adapted MBCPs, a broader integrated suite of interventions is required to ensure men using violence receive responses that meet their needs and circumstances. Men using DFV may require multiple, and at times concurrent interventions to facilitate and sustain behaviour change.

3.1: Fund MBCPs to deliver to best practice standards

The effectiveness of MBCPs is often narrowly understood, with the role they play in supporting victim-survivor safety and autonomy not appropriately appreciated. At the heart of MBCPs is family safety contact, with Women's and Children's Advocacy (WCA) providing support to current partners, former partners and children of men who engage with a MBCP. This service centres lived experience in MBCPs and provides direct supports to victim-survivors to promote their safety and healing, including assessing and responding to risk. For some victim-survivors, WCA is the first time they have received support for their experience of DFV. Even in cases where no change is observed in the man using DFV, MBCPs play an important role in contributing to women's and children's safety outcomes.¹⁸ In addition, MBCPs help some men reduce their use of physical, sexual and emotional abuse^{19 20}, while for others they can sow a seed to facilitate future attitude and behaviour change. This change is often non-linear and requires sustained effort over time; it is unrealistic to expect transformational change from a relatively short, time-limited program when attempting to challenge deeply ingrained beliefs and behaviours that are reinforced by social and cultural norms beyond the control of MBCPs. For further information on MBCPs and their effectiveness, see [The role of men's behaviour change programs in addressing men's use of domestic, family and sexual violence](#).

Despite the positive outcomes they help achieve, MBCPs are not funded to deliver critical components of best practice programs. "MBCPs need to be better funded to provide tailored, holistic and timely services that can support meaningful behaviour change."²¹ This ongoing underfunding increases safety risks for victim-survivors, limits the ability of MBCP providers to enable men to take accountability and change their behaviours, and causes unsustainable burden on practitioners and service providers. To deliver best practice MBCPs requires:

- **Increased funding for Women's and Children's Advocacy**

Although WCA is pivotal to enabling MBCPs to support victim-survivor safety and hold men using DFV accountable, current funding means positions are usually only funded part-time. This forces WCA practitioners to try to manage unsustainable caseloads, with service providers highlighting there is on average 2-3 victim-survivor partners they provide support to for each man in group. WCA can be provided long after a man completes or disengages with the program, stretching caseloads further.

¹⁸ Vlasis et al. (2017). [Family and domestic violence perpetrator programs: Issues paper of current and emerging trends, developments and expectations](#).

¹⁹ Kelly and Westmarland (2015). [Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes: Steps Towards Change. Project Mirabal Final Report](#).

²⁰ Vall et al. (2023). [Measuring the Outcome of Perpetrator Programmes through a Contextualised and Victim-Centred Approach: The Impact Project](#).

²¹ Helps et al. (2025). [The role of men's behaviour change programs in addressing men's use of domestic, family and sexual violence: An evidence brief](#).

The inadequacy of current funding also means there is little, if any, capacity to support children and young people directly.

A minimum of one full-time WCA practitioner should be funded for each MBCP. This will enable WCA to more comprehensively assess and manage risk to adult victim-survivors and support children and young people as victims in their own right. In addition to funding staff wages, service providers must be funded to safely and sustainably deliver WCA by resourcing management costs, training – including targeted training for supporting children and young people, tailored WCA supervision, and collaboration with other victim-survivor services such as Staying Home Leaving Violence and Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program to ensure integrated support.

- **Funding for state-wide post-MBCP support**

While some men complete MBCPs and make positive changes to stop using violence, it is unrealistic to expect all participants to make transformational changes from a single, approximately 40-hour intervention. Post-MBCP support can play a critical role in enhancing victim-survivor safety by providing an extended service offering to help men sustain positive attitude and behaviour changes, to continue reducing their use of violence over time.²² However, NSW MBCPs are not resourced to deliver post-program support.

- **Increased funding for one-to-one work**

Further resourcing is required to enable more in-depth pre-group readiness work, ongoing one-to-one work alongside group, and case management to enable meaningful, sustained engagement within MBCPs to realise accountability and behaviour change. Our survey of NSW service providers found two-thirds of respondents believe they have a limited or moderate ability to deliver case management. This gap means opportunities are being missed to drive tailored responses that understand and leverage individuals' unique motivations for change, assess and manage ongoing risk, and develop rapport to strengthen men's engagement in interventions. Similarly to WCA, further practice guidance is required to expand and strengthen the delivery of one-to-one work, including case management.

*"We're really missing opportunities to increase readiness and retention for men." –
Warrina Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Services*

3.2: Expand MBCPs to meet need

The current resourcing for MBCPs falls far short of need, with providers highlighting men are often waiting between three to five months on waitlists before accessing programs. This situation is only getting worse, with all providers who responded to a recent sector survey saying MBCP waitlists have become longer over the last year. Every day men using violence are on waitlists for interventions, is another day victim-survivors' safety is compromised.

²² Fitz-Gibbon et al. (2024). [Engaging in Change: A Victorian study of perpetrator program attrition and participant engagement in men's behaviour change programs.](#)

As the primarily funded DFV-specialist intervention aimed at addressing and changing the behaviour of men using DFV, significantly more MBCP places are required to help achieve the scale of transformational change needed to reduce and stop violence against victim-survivors. Further illustrating this under-resourcing, NSW funds 900 MBCP places with a population of 8.2 million people while Victoria funds 4,000 MBCP places with a population of 6.6 million people. This means there is one MBCP place for roughly every 3,400 men in NSW.²³ NSW would need to fund a total of 5,000 places to match Victoria's per capita investment.

“Our waitlist is now sitting at over 100 people – and sadly, that’s the norm. Even when we work hard to bring the number down, new clients arrive and the list climbs straight back up. It shows just how many people are reaching out for help, and how critical it is that we have the resources to meet that need.” – Sian Ord, Domestic Family Violence Programs Manager – Hunter, Relationships Australia NSW

“The number of enquiries has tripled (over the last year)” – CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay

Expanding the availability of online MBCPs presents a significant opportunity to enhance both the scale and accessibility of programs. Research has established that MBCPs can be delivered safely and effectively online, providing adaptations are taken to assess and manage risk with online delivery.^{24 25} Whereas online delivery is common in some other jurisdictions, provision in NSW remains limited. MBCP providers have expressed strong interest in offering online programs and report considerable demand, particularly in rural and regional areas where geographic isolation poses a major barrier to participation. Beyond location, online delivery can also improve access for men facing additional engagement challenges, such as those with mental health issues, people navigating conflicts of interests in small communities (e.g. where family or acquaintances may be involved in the same program), and those with irregular work schedules or travel commitments, such as fly-in, fly-out workers. While additional processes are required to ensure safe online delivery of MBCPs, many service providers have valuable experience delivering other online programs – such as parenting and education – which can inform the development of robust, victim-survivor-centred MBCPs.

“Unemployment is a significant risk factor for men who use violence, so we take great care not to jeopardise someone’s job by asking them to attend at unworkable times. One of our participants currently joins every week straight from the mine – still covered in coal dust – because his employer provides a confidential space

²³ Calculated using residential NSW population of males aged 20+. NSW Health (2025). [Population estimates NSW by Age \(years\) and Sex for 2023](#).

²⁴ Helps et al. (2023). [‘Just opens up a whole new possibility of change’: A review of the Men's Exploring New Directions online program](#).

²⁵ Opoku and Heard. (2023). [Adapting a men’s behaviour change program to online delivery using a developmental evaluation approach](#).

onsite so he can log in safely. It's a powerful reminder that when workplaces support men to stay engaged in these programs, it can make a real difference.” – Sian Ord, Domestic Family Violence Programs Manager – Hunter, Relationships Australia NSW

3.3: Fund an integrated suite of interventions for men using DFV

Men using DFV are a diverse cohort with a complex range of motivating and contextual factors influencing their use of violence, and subsequently, a broader suite of interventions is needed to effectively change behaviour. The suite of interventions must be integrated and available at different stages of their life cycle because a person's journey through accountability and behaviour change is typically non-linear and may require multiple interventions. Different men may respond more effectively to different types of interventions, or the same man may respond differently to one intervention at different stages of his life. This means collaborative information sharing is critical between interventions for men using DFV, as well as with victim-survivor DFV services and allied services to support effective risk assessment, family safety support, and intervention tailoring. Below we outline some key program models that are crucial in an integrated suite of interventions.

- **Residential-based interventions**

Residential-based interventions provide men using DFV with access to temporary accommodation while they take part in counselling and receive other support services to help end their use of violence. This enables victim-survivors the choice to remain in their home, connected to their community. Because insecure housing is a primary barrier to men using DFV completing behaviour change interventions, residential-based interventions offer positive behaviour change outcomes while shifting the burden of change from victim-survivors to users of violence.²⁶

- **Fathering-focused interventions**

There is growing evidence that interventions focused on fathering have positive outcomes for reducing and preventing DFV. When implemented in a gender-transformative way, these programs have multiplier effects – reducing family violence, promoting gender equality and improving child outcomes. Men's desire to build and maintain positive father-child relationships can serve as powerful leverage for driving motivation for change.²⁷ There is also enormous potential for fathering-focused interventions with new fathers, with parenthood a key juncture in which men can be more open to reevaluating gender norms.²⁸

“We've couched our men's behaviour change program in a parenting program. So, we're establishing parenting programs prior to the men's behaviour change

²⁶ Fitz-Gibbon et al. (2024). [Engaging in Change: A Victorian study of perpetrator program attrition and participant engagement in men's behaviour change programs.](#)

²⁷ Broady et al. (2017). [‘I Miss My Little One A Lot’: How Father Love Motivates Change in Men Who Have Used Violence.](#)

²⁸ Loiffe et al. (2022). [Men building better relationships: A scoping review.](#)

program and then a circle of security and other parenting programs post men's behaviour change, which keeps those men engaged with us a little bit longer and we're finding that that is actually keeping men retained into our men's behaviour change program as well.” – Relationships Australia Canberra & Regions

- **All-of-family programs**

All-of-family approaches seek to work with all family members – including mothers, fathers, children, and other family members such as in kinship groups – to discuss experiences of harm, intervention needs and safety-planning. NTV members have consistently called for greater investment in all-of-family services, emphasising that they are crucial for addressing the causes of DFV and promoting healthier relationships to ensure long-lasting behaviour change

- **First-Nations-led and healing focused programs**

Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations should be funded and supported to develop self-determined, locally specific and strengths-based responses to DFV. Programs should not be restricted to adapting MBCPs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, as these can be limited by rigid program frameworks centred on Western perspectives on gender, family and social norms.

- **Tailored interventions for young men and boys using DFV**

The broader suite of interventions should include dedicated programs for both adolescent violence in the home (AVITH) – which refers to abusive behaviours against family members or carers – and youth intimate partner violence. It is critical that interventions for young men and boys using DFV are age-tailored and trauma-informed, as most young people who use violence have themselves been victims of DFV. Research by ANROWS found that 89% of AVITH cases had experienced and/or witnessed DFV or DFV-supportive behaviours.²⁹ Service providers have highlighted benefits of flexible, individualised practice models for young men and boys using DFV, including ability to identify misidentification of the predominant aggressor. Program for this cohort must also take a holistic approach to address the interconnected challenges facing young people using violence, including rigid gender norms, social connectedness, and unsafe online environments.

- **Intensive case management**

Men using DFV often have complex life stories and experiences of co-occurring issues, meaning individualised, tailored responses are required. Case management provides a mechanism to deliver this support and should be available to men using DFV independently from other interventions, as some men may be ineligible for certain programs and may require multiple, concurrent responses to address their needs effectively.

²⁹ Campbell et al. (2023). [WRAP around families experiencing AVITH: Towards a collaborative service response. ANROWS.](#)

3.4: Ensure scaling up of men’s DFV interventions are integrated as part of multi-layered, community-led approaches to prevent and respond to DFV

There is too often an unrealistic expectation that men’s DFV interventions will singlehandedly hold men accountable to facilitate behaviour change. This disconnectedness is a major limitation in efforts to stop DFV as these interventions don’t exist within a vacuum: they can be undermined or enhanced by the broader social and service environment in which they are delivered.³⁰ Thus it is critical that efforts to scale up men’s DFV interventions are integrated with broader efforts to prevent and respond to DFV, embedding a multi-layered approach that connects initiatives across prevention, early intervention, response and recovery and healing. This integration should importantly happen at the community level to leverage local knowledge, foster trust and collaboration, and enable culturally responsive solutions.

Objective 4: Build a workforce and evidence base that supports expanded responses to men using DFV

To enable the scaling up of interventions outlined above, urgent investment is needed to grow and strengthen the DFV workforce and advance the evidence base on men using DFV. These sector reforms must happen concurrently with efforts to expand intervention delivery because a larger workforce can’t be grown without increased employment opportunities, and the generation and application of evidence in real time optimises the efficiency of practice development.

4.1: Invest in developing a strong, specialised and sustainable workforce

The recent NSW Domestic and Family Violence Workforce Strategy provides a valuable roadmap to build and support the DFV workforce. Beyond implementing actions outlined in the strategy, an important step to build greater sustainability in the workforce working with men using DFV is implementing the NSW Government’s 2023 election commitment to 5-year funding contracts. While the 2026-27 Budget will deliver this for most DFV services, services for men using DFV have been left out. This means services for men using DFV will continue being stifled by short-term contracts and uncertainty around future funding, fuelling recruitment and retention challenges. We recommend all services for men using DFV receive 5-year contracts.

³⁰ Helps et al. (2025). [The role of men’s behaviour change programs in addressing men’s use of domestic, family and sexual violence: An evidence brief.](#)

4.2: Invest in practice-based research to improve the evidence base

As emphasised in the Australian National Research Agenda to End Violence against Women and Children, better understanding men using DFV needs to be a research priority if we are to end DFV in a generation.³¹

Current approaches to measuring intervention programs' effectiveness are fundamentally inadequate. A systematic review examining 80 peer reviewed studies across 35 years found there is an urgent need for "more nuanced analyses of program outcomes that capture the non-linear, relational process with which people engage in perpetrator programs, and behavior change more broadly."³²

The NSW Government's investment in the current MBCP evaluation (2024-2027) represents national leadership in strengthening the evidence base. To maximise this investment and address gaps identified in research and practice, three complementary research priorities require dedicated funding:

1. **Developing proximal indicators to measure attitude and behaviour changes** – Develop validated tools that help practitioners recognise emotional, cognitive, relational and contractual patterns during program delivery. These include things like group cohesion, contribution patterns and motivational readiness – providing real-time feedback to measure and leverage attitude and behaviour changes.
2. **Understanding pathways into violence** – Research examining why some men with multiple risk factors don't use violence while others with few established risk factors do, to inform prevention efforts and more targeted intervention approaches.
3. **Extending knowledge through longitudinal follow-up** – Studies tracking participants 5-7 years beyond program completion to distinguish sustainable change from temporary behaviour modification.

³¹ Lloyd et al. (2023). [The Australian National Research Agenda to End Violence against Women and Children \(ANRA\) 2023–2028](#).

³² Ralph et al. (2025). [Understanding Participant \(Dis\)Engagement From Domestic Violence Perpetrator Group Programs: A Review and Qualitative Synthesis](#).

Fund a peak body to strengthen the evidence base and policy and practice responses to end men's use of DFV

To support the urgently needed expansion and strengthening of responses to men using DFV outlined in this submission and the *NSW Strategy to respond to the use of DFV*, dedicated funding is required to ensure real-time frontline knowledge informs improved responses to men using DFV. This priority was underscored in the *NSW Domestic and Family Violence Workforce Strategy*, with the recommendation to explore resourcing options to establish a peak body for organisations and individuals committed to ending men's use of DFV.

No to Violence is uniquely positioned to be the NSW peak body, having increasingly provided strategic policy and practice advice to the NSW Government to inform the development and expansion of responses to men using violence. This has included playing a central role in shaping the *NSW Strategy to respond to the use of DFV* and supporting the development and implementation of *NSW Domestic and Family Violence Workforce Strategy*, *NSW Primary Prevention Strategy*, coercive control legislation, and bail reforms.

No to Violence is ideally situated at the intersection of research and practice to support the NSW Government to advance the evidence base for intervening with men using DFV. NTV would leverage our national research agenda which identifies key knowledge gaps to build a deeper understanding of pathways into and out of using DFV in NSW. Knowledge developed through recent research projects would enable No to Violence to strengthen responses to key issues – such as young men's use of intimate partner violence, co-occurrence of DFV with alcohol and other drugs, and the interface between Women's and Children's Advocates and victim-survivor practitioners. No to Violence will also utilise the findings from the Pathways Project into innovative practice to support the NSW sector to develop quality practice standards and guidance for the broader suite of interventions outlined in Recommendation 3.3. No to Violence is also developing practice tools at the national level, which would be informed by insights from stakeholders in NSW, and be made available to NSW service providers to adapt in their own work.

The NSW Government currently provide No to Violence \$476,190 per year to coordinate and support registered providers of MBCPs as the Secretariat of the MBCN. **Providing an additional \$658,837 per year will enable No to Violence to leverage our strong relationships with service providers across NSW to:**

1. Advance the evidence base for intervening earlier and more effectively with men using DFV.
2. Centre practice-based knowledge to inform policy and practice development of a broad integrated suite of responses to men using DFV.
3. Expand sector development support to advance practice capability and capacity of responses to men using DFV.

Establish a DFV reform implementation body responsible for coordinating the sector and how the NSW Government and its agencies deliver DFV reforms

With several important state strategies – including the first dedicated strategies for primary prevention, people using DFV, and DFSV in Aboriginal communities – in addition to a broad range of policy and practice developments, the NSW DFV sector is experiencing unprecedented reform. It is crucial this reform is implemented effectively to minimise duplication, reduce burden on service providers, and optimise safety outcomes for women and children. While the NSW DFV Board provides the authorising environment for these reforms, a coordination mechanism is required to assess the progress and effectiveness of reforms and identify opportunities to improve alignment and collaboration to ensure cohesive integrated systems. This body should be tasked with coordinating initiatives to optimise reform implementation and holding the NSW Government accountable for its commitments- critical due to the fact accountability for DFV must happen at both an individual and systems level.

In support of advocacy led by Domestic Violence NSW, we call for sector reforms to:

Commit at least a further \$7.5 million to implement the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Workforce Strategy

The 2025-26 Budget investment of \$2.5 million to begin implementation of the *NSW Domestic and Family Violence Workforce Strategy* has enabled important work to start to strengthen the specialist DFV workforce. However, this 10-year strategy lays out a long-term plan and requires continued investment to develop a skilled and diverse workforce capable of meeting demand for DFV services. Further funding is required to implement priority actions identified in the strategy, including partnering with vocational and higher education bodies to increase uptake of DFV-related courses, developing First Nations community-led pathways into the DFV workforce, and establishing more communities of practice.

To build a workforce of the scale and specialisation capable of effectively addressing the DFV crisis, substantial investment is required to translate key actions within the strategy from exploratory ideas to tangible implementations. For further information on the Strategy's actions, see [Strengthening the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Sector: Workforce Development Strategy \(2025-2035\)](#).

The NSW Government should invest at least a further \$7.5 million to implement the Strategy, noting that Victoria set a gold standard with an investment of \$95.4 million to deliver the 10-year *Building from Strength* industry plan and a further \$8.1 million for supported traineeships.³³

Commit at least a further \$8 million to implement the NSW Aboriginal Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Plan

The NSW Government's \$2 million investment to start rolling out the state's first Aboriginal Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) Plan has enabled important co-design and development in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Aboriginal community stakeholders and the broader domestic violence sector. Significant investment is now required to implement the Plan's actions and support Aboriginal-led, self-determined and place-based solutions to address the disproportionate rates of DFV experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children and the impacts of ongoing colonial violence. This investment must be supported by shifts within Government systems and non-Aboriginal organisations to eliminate racism, embed cultural safety and reduce reliance on punitive, criminal justice-centred responses to DFSV.

The Plan's goal, shaped by Target 13 of the National Closing the Gap Agreement, to reduce rates of DFSV against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children by at least 50% by 2031 is ambitious and essential. Achieving this transformational change will require urgent and substantial investment. In light of this ambition, we believe the real cost of implementing the plan is at least \$8 million and likely much higher.

Commit a further \$11.4 million to implement the Common Approach to Risk Assessment and Safety

The development of the Common Approach to Risk Assessment and Safety (CARAS) is a critical step to improving the timeliness and consistency of DFV risk identification and management across government agencies, non-government and community organisations. While the draft framework has importantly been developed through close consultation with sector stakeholders, its impact will largely be determined by the success of its implementation. As highlighted in the recent Implementation Insights Report led by DFV Special Advisor, Karen Webb, "targeted investment will be essential to realise a fully integrated, high-performing risk assessment and management system."³⁴

³³ Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor. (2020). [Report of the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor – as at 1 November 2020](#).

³⁴ Department of Communities and Justice. (2025). [Domestic and Family Violence Common Risk Assessment Framework Implementation Insights Report](#).

A key priority in the next steps to test, refine and implement the CARAS should be to explore opportunities to expand its scope to men using DFV. As outlined in the Implementation Insights Report, an integrated framework has a range of benefits including a more holistic approach, earlier interventions, supporting workforce capacity building, and reducing misidentification and victim-blaming.³⁵ This expansion must ensure integration of the Risk, Safety and Support Framework (RSSF), which is the dedicated risk assessment framework for MBCPs in NSW.

Commit a further \$50 million to implement the NSW Strategy for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence

While all reforms discussed throughout this submission are vitally important, it will be impossible to achieve the scale of change required to end DFV unless more is done to stop violence before it starts. Since the NSW Government's commitment of \$38 million to implement the *NSW Strategy for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence* in 2024, significant progress has been made to support initiatives that challenge the underlying causes of DFSV. This support must be sustained and further scaled, to improve safety and wellbeing of women and children, while alleviating pressure on an overburdened DFV response system. As advocated by Domestic Violence NSW, a further \$50 million is required to fully implement the strategy and address the investment shortfall.

³⁵ Department of Communities and Justice. (2025). [Domestic and Family Violence Common Risk Assessment Framework Implementation Insights Report](#).